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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

In Praise of Sen. Pell

Matthew Cooper, in his article about the "uninspiring" individuals that Senate Democrats have to offer as committee chairmen ["Geritol for Senate Democrats," Outlook, Dec. 2], stated that the ranking Democrat on the Committee on Foreign Relations, Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), is lethargic and no match for the incoming chairman. The facts, however, disclose something else.

I worked for Sen. Pell on the Labor and Human Resources Committee and on his personal staff from January 1982 until April 1984. During that time I saw him attend almost every Foreign Relations Committee hearing and markup; meet personally with scores of ambassadors, visiting dignitaries, dissidents and refugees; lead Senate opposition to the Marines' "peace-keeping" force in Beirut; exer-

cise his influence to free the daughter of executed Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan from house arrest; cause the release of a dozen Americans who were seized by Cuba when their boat veered too close to Cuban waters; and, through questioning of the Central Intelligence Agency, stimulate the CIA's admission to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that it had participated in the mining of Nicaraguan harbors. All this while fulfilling his other legislative and political duties.

Sen. Pell remains vigorous and effective, and his 24 years on the Foreign Relations Committee provide knowledge and judgment that a second-term chairman, even though well-intentioned, cannot hope to match.

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